Statement by

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At our last Development Committee Meeting in April 2013, we endorsed the idea that all World Bank Group institutions must adopt a common and unified vision of the strategy to combat poverty and insecurity.

We also supported the definition of the mission of the World Bank Group in the form of quantifiable goals, namely reducing extreme poverty to 3 percent by 2030 and boosting shared prosperity for the bottom 40 percent of the world’s population.

Our Committee is now called upon to review the strategy that should allow the World Bank Group to achieve these goals. It is with keen interest that we welcome this strategy.

In this regard, we note that the proposed strategy is aimed at repositioning the World Bank Group to focus on these two goals and concentrating all the activities of the WBG and its financial resources on these two indicators.

While the pillars identified for presenting this strategy are important, we think that they should be developed somewhat.

We therefore support the notion of a shift within the World Bank from a “projects culture” to a “solutions culture,” which constitutes the first pillar of this strategy.

Conditions of insecurity the world over and the risks faced by an increasing proportion of the world’s population require a solutions approach capable of offering clear responses to the problems of poverty and insecurity.

The expertise and knowledge existing within the World Bank, the world’s leading development institution, enable it to recommend development solutions to its member countries. Clearly, we support the recommendations that propose:

- Shifting the focus to expertise and knowledge and providing services adapted to the needs of countries;
- Integrating a culture of performance and results into Bank activities and involving the institution’s partners in this process through more effective knowledge sharing and greater engagement with citizen-beneficiaries as well as civil society; and
• Focusing the Bank’s assistance and expertise on actions that have great potential for transformational impact and improving the daily lives of poor and vulnerable populations.

However, it is our view that these recommendations alone will not allow the Bank to achieve its poverty reduction goals. Consideration should also be given to the institutional structure that will be established for the World Bank Group as a whole and to the mobilization of suitable human and financial resources, in order to help with the successful repositioning of the Bank.

We therefore call on our Bank to ensure that this shift toward a solutions Bank does not come at the expense of the assistance provided by the Bank for reform programs and investment projects, given the extremely positive impact of these operations on the capacity of countries to address situations of fragility and dependence.

The second pillar is the recommendation that the Bank adopt a selective approach when engaging with member countries.

Experts are calling on the Bank to help member countries place their priorities within the framework of the goals set for the Bank by:

(i) Preparing a diagnostic framework that ensures a better understanding of the priorities of each country;

(ii) Preparing a flexible framework for partnership that allows the specific priorities of member countries to be harmonized with the two goals of the Bank’s new strategy; and

(iii) Establishing a framework for monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up that provides for performance and results reviews and for making the necessary adjustments, as appropriate.

From our vantage point, this selectivity should (i) take into account the specificities of each country rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to member countries as a whole; (ii) strengthen the resilience of countries to face financial, economic, social, and environmental challenges; and (iii) be applied using clear and simple procedures.

Lastly, and with respect to the third pillar that consists of having the different members of the World Bank Group operate as one cohesive World Bank Group, we support the idea that this consolidation effort should entail the adoption of a collaborative approach based on the comparative advantages of each member institution.

We view an approach of this nature as being of critical importance, inasmuch as it facilitates the development of synergies among the different institutions of the World Bank Group. Countries will therefore benefit from coordinated and cohesive activities by the World Bank Group.

Enhancing the consolidation of “one World Bank Group” also entails an intelligent distribution of tasks based on a coherent, integrated, and results-based approach.

We look forward to continuing discussions on the different operational aspects related to implementation of the World Bank Group’s strategy, to be presented by the Bank’s management at the 2014 meetings of the Development Committee.
We still believe that continuing the internal reform process started by the Bank in the areas of governance, gender parity, streamlining of procedures, and diversification of the modalities of and conditions for intervention by the Bank, in particular, are all areas that can contribute to the success of this ambitious strategy.